CLAIMS

1. Use of a soluble protein comprising a sequence having at least 85% of homology with the mature form of the extracellular domain of human CD164 (SEQ ID NO: 1) for the manufacture of a medicament for treatment and/or prevention of inflammatory or/and autoimmune disorders.

2. The use of claim 1 wherein said soluble protein is chosen from:

   a) SEQ ID NO: 1; or

   b) SEQ ID NO: 1 fused to the signal sequence of human CD 164.

3. The use of claim 1 wherein said soluble protein is an active mutein or an isoform of SEQ ID NO: 1.

4. The use of claim 3 wherein said soluble protein is chosen from:

   a) MGC-24 (SEQ ID NO: 6); or

   b) the mature form of the extracellular domain of any of the following human CD164 isoforms: CD164-delta 4 (SEQ ID NO: 4), CD164-delta 5 (SEQ ID NO: 5).

5. The use according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said soluble protein is glycosylated.

6. The use according to claim 5, wherein said soluble protein is glycosylated at any of the positions as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1.

7. The use according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said soluble protein is phosphorylated.

8. The use according to claim 7, wherein said soluble protein is phosphorylated at any of the positions as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1.

9. The use according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said soluble protein is myristoylated.

10. The use according to claim 9, wherein said soluble protein is myristoylated at any of the positions as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1.

11. The use according to any of the preceding claims wherein said soluble protein is a soluble fusion protein.

12. The use of claim 11 wherein said soluble fusion protein comprises a signal sequence.

13. The use of claims 11 or 12 wherein said soluble fusion protein contains a Histidine tag.

14. The use of claim 13 wherein said soluble fusion protein is SEQ ID NO: 2.

15. The use according to claims 11 or 12, wherein said soluble fusion protein comprises a Fc region of an immunoglobulin.

16. The use according to any of the preceding claims wherein said soluble protein is an active derivative, a proteolysis-resistant modified form, a conjugate, a complex, a fraction, a precursor, and/or a salt.

17. Use of a polynucleotide sequence encoding for a soluble protein comprising a sequence having at least 85% of homology with the mature form of the extracellular domain of human CD164 (SEQ ID NO: 1) for the manufacture of a medicament for treatment and/or prevention of inflammatory or/and autoimmune disorders.

18. The use according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said inflammatory and/or autoimmune disease is selected from the group consisting of: multiple sclerosis, systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, osteoarthritis, spondylarthropathies, inflammatory bowel disease, endotoxemia, Crohn's disease, Still's disease, uveitis, Wegener's granulomatosis, Behcet's disease, scleroderma, Sjogren's syndrome,

sarcoidosis, pyodema gangrenosum, polymyositis, dermatomyositis, myocarditis, psoriasis, systemic sclerosis, hepatitis C, allergies, allergic inflammation, allergic airway inflammation, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), mesenteric infarction, stroke, ulcerative colitis, allergic asthma, bronchial asthma, mesenteric infarction, stroke, fibrosis, post-ischemic inflammation in muscle, kidney and heart, skin inflammation, glomerulonephritis, juvenile onset type I diabetes mellitus, hypersensitvity diseases, viral or acute liver diseases, alcoholic liver failures, tuberculosis, septic shock, HIV–infection, graft-versus-host disease (GVHD) and atherosclerosis.

19. A method of inhibiting the expression of one or more cytokines in an individual comprising administering to said individual a composition comprising a soluble protein comprising a sequence having at least 85% of homology with the mature form of the extracellular domain of human CD164 (SEQ ID NO: 1).

20. The method according to claim 19, wherein said cytokine is TNF-α, IFN-γ, IL-2, IL-4, IL-5, or IL-10.

21. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a soluble protein comprising a sequence having at least 85% of homology with the mature form of the extracellular domain of human CD164 (SEQ ID NO: 1), in the presence of one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients, for the treatment of inflammation and/or autoimmune disorders.

22. Screening assays including a soluble protein comprising a sequence having at least 85% of homology with the mature form of the extracellular domain of human CD164 (SEQ ID NO: 1), for identifying and compare the properties of compounds as inhibitors of cytokine secretion and expression.

23. Kits for identifying and compare the properties of compounds as inhibitors of cytokine secretion and expression comprising a soluble protein comprising a sequence having at least 85% of homology with the mature form of the extracellular domain of human CD164 (SEQ ID NO: 1).